

This bill will result in outcomes not desired by the American people. It will end up undercutting religion as well as religious freedom. It will enrage Americans by using their tax dollars to subsidize religious beliefs they disagree with. It undercuts our Constitution, provides not one additional cent of tax money to help the poor, and will end up stimulating religious conflict and racial and religious discrimination. Please have the good sense to vote no.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for each side to have 10 additional minutes, having consulted with my leader on the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

Mr. THOMAS. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) in terms of the statement of the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, it seems as though, on this very controversial but important subject matter, there are so many Members who would like to share their views before we have time to vote on this, and in view of the fact that the Committee on the Judiciary has had jurisdiction over the substance of this and the time was split and they need additional time, if there is any technicality because the Committee on Ways and Means would follow them that interferes with them getting unanimous consent, I would like to yield to them on this issue.

Mr. THOMAS. Continuing to reserve my right to object, Mr. Speaker, I would tell the gentleman that actually we have 2 hours of debate on this question. As the Speaker indicated in announcing the rule, there is an hour of general debate and an hour on the substitute.

That means the Committee on the Judiciary, if the time is divided on the substitute, the same as was divided on general debate, would have 1 hour. That is the normal debate time. The Committee on Ways and Means would have 1 hour. The Committee on the Judiciary would have an hour.

The debate is not necessarily narrowly directed to the subject at hand; i.e., if the gentleman from Michigan (Chairman CONYERS) has some of his members of the Committee on the Judiciary who wish to make general statements about the underlying legislation, they certainly are able to, and indeed, we often do that during the debate on the substitute.

It seems to me that an extra 1 hour on this subject matter for a full 2 hours of discussion is more than ample.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), a distinguished member of the Committee.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Michigan for yielding time to me, and I thank the leaders for this very important debate.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reinforce the importance of this debate and the importance of characterizing this debate for what it is: the desire for those of us who believe in the first amendment and the Bill of Rights to emphasize that this should not be a referendum on our faith, for this country was founded on the ability to be able to practice one's faith without intrusion.

But rather, I would hope that this particular debate will focus around the intent and the understanding of James Madison, the father of the first amendment, that indicated that he believed that the commingling of church and State was something that should not exist, and that he apprehended the meaning of the establishment clause to be that "Congress shall not establish a religion and enforce the legal observance of it by law, nor compel men or women to worship God in any manner contrary to their conscience."

It means that if I am of a different belief and I want to fight against child abuse, and a particular religious institution is running a child abuse prevention charitable organization in my community, I should be able to be hired. Under this bill, although it has good intentions, it forces direct monies into religious institutions, not requiring them to comply with any means of preventing discrimination.

Martin Luther King said "Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere." Discrimination on the basis of religion somewhere is discrimination everywhere.

What we want here is an understanding that we embrace faith, but we do not embrace discrimination. Change this legislation, eliminate the discriminatory aspects, eliminate the voucher program, eliminate the direct funding of religion, and James Madison's voice and spirit will live and the Bill of Rights will live, and we can all support this legislation.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN).

(Ms. BALDWIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, this debate is about the fundamental relationship between a democratic government and religious institutions.

The first amendment has two purposes. First, it is designed to prevent the government from using its power to promote a particular religion. Second, it is designed to protect religious institutions from unwarranted intrusions of government.

I believe H.R. 7 endangers both of these purposes. This bill expands the

religious exemption under Title VII to clearly nonreligious activities, and it preempts State and all other local non-discrimination laws. For the first time, Federal dollars, public funds, will be used to discriminate; or put another way, Americans can be barred from taxpayer-funded employment on the basis of their religion or other factors.

Civil rights and religious freedom go hand-in-hand. Undermine one and we undermine the other.

Mr. Speaker, it is a mistake for government and religion to become entangled. I urge my colleagues to reaffirm our commitment to separation of church and State by defeating H.R. 7.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 7.

Let me begin by saying that I very much value the traditional role of religious institutions in providing social services. Our country has been made stronger through the good works of people of faith in helping those in need. Religious institutions have long fed the hungry, clothed the poor, given shelter to the homeless, and helped heal the sick. These contributions have been absolutely essential for millions of Americans throughout the history of our great nation.

But this debate is not whether or not religious institutions should do good works. We all agree that they do and they should. This debate is about the fundamental relationship between a democratic government and religious institutions.

The Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution sets forth the fundamental principles upon which our democracy is based—freedom of speech, freedom of expression, right to trial by jury, limitations on searches and seizures, the right to bear arms. One of the most fundamental protections in our Constitution is freedom of religion.

The First Amendment states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This Constitutional principle has two purposes. First, it is designed to prevent the government from using its power to promote a particular religion. Our Founding Fathers rightly saw that true freedom of worship was impossible if the state advantaged one religion over others.

The second purpose is to protect religious institutions from the unwarranted intrusion of government. The independence of religious institutions from the hand of government is fundamental to the free exercise of religion.

I believe H.R. 7 endangers both of these purposes and therefore undermines our nation's commitment to the free exercise of religion. This bill will allow religious institutions to accept direct government funding of social service programs. While it purports to ban proselytizing using tax dollars, it still permits the mingling of religion and government as never before seen in our country. It extends the reach of government into the private religious sphere. And I believe it is unconstitutional.

It is not in the best interest of our religious institutions to have government agencies pick and choose which church or synagogue or mosque should get taxpayer dollars. As my colleague Mr. SCHIFF of California said in the Judiciary Committee, "would it be appropriate for Members of Congress to write letters in